

worst possible message at the worst possible time. I hope this House will reject the proposals from the administration.

NATIONAL MONUMENT FAIRNESS ACT

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to express my strong support for the passage of the National Monuments Fairness Act, which ensures the people's rights to public land are protected. For too many years the executive branch has abused the Antiquities Act by proclaiming thousands upon thousands of square miles of land as national monuments. Such actions do not reflect the original intention of the Antiquities Act, which was aimed to protect small areas of land and specific items of historical importance which were in imminent danger of destruction.

The National Monument Fairness Act will restore balance to the national monument designation process by requiring congressional approval and public input.

The people of America deserve input as to how their public lands are managed, and Nevadans can no longer afford to be left out of this process. Close to 90 percent of the State of Nevada is owned by the Federal Government. It is time to ensure the rights of the people to their land. I encourage my colleagues to support the National Monuments Fairness Act.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

(Ms. WATSON of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WATSON of California. Mr. Speaker, as of now, Medicare does not cover the cost of prescription drugs. Approximately 10 million Medicare recipients nationwide lack any prescription drug coverage. I want Members to support the Democratic plan for strengthening Medicare. The Democratic plan uses the collective bargaining power of Medicare's 40 million beneficiaries to guarantee lower drug prices. Medicare contractors will compete for enrollees by negotiating discounts. Drug prices will be reduced for everyone by stopping big drug company patent abuses.

Mr. Speaker, the plan the House adopts must lower the cost of drugs for all seniors. It must ensure senior coverage for all drugs their doctor prescribes. The plan should be an affordable and guaranteed Medicare drug benefit. It must not force seniors into HMOs or predatory private insurance. The Democratic proposal addresses each of these points.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic plan guarantees choice on prescription

drugs. I urge my colleagues to honor our seniors.

THE MEDICARE MODERNIZATION AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG ACT OF 2002

(Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KENNEDY of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the Medicare Modernization and Prescription Drug Act of 2002. This bill is important and overdue for our seniors.

An article in today's Minneapolis Star Tribune says that prescription drug prices in Minnesota are among the Nation's highest. For Minnesotans, and indeed for all Americans, we need to pass a prescription drug coverage bill now.

Yesterday Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson released a study showing that our plan would save seniors more money than our friends on the other side of the aisle's proposal. Our plan would give seniors immediately a 30 percent discount off the top on their overall drug costs, and, combined with traditional front-loaded insurance coverage, it would reduce the cost of prescriptions by half for the average senior.

But, in addition, we provide catastrophic coverage so that seniors do not have to deplete a lifetime of savings in order to be able to afford life-giving prescriptions, and we give 100 percent prescription drug coverage for low-income seniors, and give more Medicare and senior choices.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BILL

(Ms. BALDWIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, what are the priorities of this Congress? Recently, it seems that the primary concern of the majority is passing tax cuts costing trillions of dollars that benefit the very wealthy and do not even go into effect for 10 years from now.

Next week, the majority will finally bring to the floor a bill that is the ultimate concern of thousands of seniors in the United States, the Medicare prescription drug bill. Unfortunately, the Republican bill is such a sham that it will not even stand up to the scrutiny of a truth-in-advertising law.

If we put the concerns of seniors who desperately need help in paying for their prescriptions first, then we must pass a benefit that is affordable.

I recently received a letter from Donna O'Keefe, a retiree who lives in Baraboo, Wisconsin. Her drug bills total \$400 a month, and she receives only \$640 a month from Social Security. Seniors like Donna need a com-

prehensive prescription drug benefit that has no gaps and no gimmicks. They need real drug coverage under Medicare.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, the problem of the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs is one that requires both a short-term and a long-term solution. It is clear that seniors need a permanent, universal, and voluntary Medicare-based prescription drug benefit that provides more savings and more choice.

My hope is that Congress will implement what I call a two-tiered approach to the problem, immediate relief through a prescription drug discount card, in addition to a long-term benefit through Medicare.

The House Committee on Ways and Means has already passed a bill that uses this approach. Through a generous Medicare benefit and the use of an interim drug discount card, Congress will be able to provide seniors the savings that they need and deserve now and in the future. With the national Medicare-endorsed prescription drug card, seniors will be able to realize a savings between 10 and 20 percent, and once the more comprehensive Medicare benefit is fully implemented, seniors will be able to save 70 percent of their out-of-pocket costs.

America's seniors deserve a long-term benefit. An interim measure would help keep the cost down.

MAJORITY LEADER EXCUSES CORPORATIONS WHO FLEE AMERICA TO AVOID PAYING TAXES

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, many Americans wonder why this Congress has taken no effective action to stop another Enron debacle, and no effective action to prevent one multinational corporation after another from fleeing America in order to evade its taxes.

Yesterday, we received the explanation, with all of its customary sensitivity, from the Republican majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), who attacked those of us who have initiatives to stop these acts of disloyalty to America by saying, "This is akin to punishing a taxpayer for choosing to itemize instead of taking the standard deduction."

Most Americans may own a few pairs of Bermuda shorts, but they cannot become "Bermudan" on April 15 and remain American the other days of the year to enjoy the benefits of our American citizenship. I believe this Congress needs to speak and act firmly to prevent those who forget the maxim of